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Rome a Center of Iran's Terror Plotting

Iranian diplomatic facilities in Rome are the principal center for planning Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's terrorist operations throughout Western Europe.

Our intelligence sources now believe that the Iranian colony in Rome assisted in the Christmastime gun and grenade attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports. The head of Italy's military intelligence service reported earlier that the airport terrorists had been trained in Iran.

While Libya has been fingered as the main culprit in the airport attacks, and there is close cooperation among Libya, Iran and Syria in terrorist activities, it is the Iranians who have been responsible for the killing and kidnaping of more Americans than any other terrorist sponsor. The grisly "body count" of Americans killed by Iranian-inspired violence is 50 times that of Libyan-backed assassins.

Rome became the headquarters for Iran's Western European terrorist operations in early 1984, following the French government's expulsion of many Khomeini supporters from Paris. Brussels is the secondary center for the violent exportation of Khomeini's Islamic revolution.

The Iranian terrorist nest in Rome is directed by Ayatollah Khosrow-Shahi, Khomeini's ambassador to the Vatican. The son of a carpenter, Khosrow-Shahi had been imprisoned by the late shah for subversive activities. After the shah's ouster, Khosrow-Shahi became Khomeini's chauffeur, bodyguard and trusted aide. He was second-in-command of the student revolutionaries who seized the American Embassy in Tehran and

held its personnel hostage for 444 days. He was rewarded in 1981 with the ambassadorial appointment to the Vatican.

At least twice, Italian police have monitored Rome meetings arranged by Khosrow-Shahi of top officials in the Iranian and Syrian secret services.

Much of the plotting goes on at the Islamic European Cultural Center at 361-63 Via Nomentana, a large complex purchased on Khosrow-Shahi's arrival. He and his deputy also have an apartment at 56 Colli de la Farnesina, but most of the work is done in the 60-room center.

The Italians use long-range cameras to keep watch on the center, but surveillance is made difficult by hidden exits to two nearby streets and at least one underground passage to the Libyan embassy next door.

Trunks suspected of containing arms and explosives have been delivered to the center—immune from search under diplomatic seal. Hundreds of young, bearded Iranians have come and gone over the past five years, including one lot of three dozen flown into Rome ostensibly for medical treatment, although the center has no medical facilities.

One reason the Italians are so concerned about these young Iranians is the secret minutes of a high-level conference held in Tehran on May 26, 1984. Ayatollah Mohammed Khatami, Khomeini's minister of Islamic guidance, ordered Iranian officials to produce 1,500 to 2,000 men for suicide missions. They were to be under 30, preferably unmarried and "completely committed to martyrdom," according to the minutes.